

USS STRIBLING (DD-867)
FLEET POST OFFICE
New York, New York 09501

10 February 1972

SHIP'S HISTORY

The USS STRIBLING (DD-867) is named in honor of Rear Admiral Cornelius Kinchlow Stribling, whose 61 years of active Naval Service included service in both the War of 1812 and the War Between the States. While the USS STRIBLING can never hope for sixty-one years of active service, this history will show that she has seen much of the world during her commissioned time.

Commissioned September 29, 1945, the STRIBLING is a Gearing Class, general purpose destroyer. Her modified superstructure, her new equipment, and her increased firepower are the direct results of lessons learned by her predecessors from years of actual combat. Many changes have taken place since 1945.

The STRIBLING displaces 3,400 tons, has a length of 396 feet and a beam of 41 feet. Prior to her FRAM I overhaul, she was armed with six dual purpose five inch guns enclosed in three twin mounts; twin 3"/50 caliber mounts, two single 3"/50 mounts, torpedoes, hedgehogs, and depth charges.

Following her commissioning, the STRIBLING "shook down" at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and then moved on to Key West, Florida, where she acted as flag ship for the fleet sonar school squadron. While at Key West, the STRIBLING was chosen to serve as host to President Truman, and carried the Commander-in-Chief and a party of other high officials on a cruise to Dry Tortugas.

In 1949 the STRIBLING joined other destroyers with the U.S. SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean. This was the first of many cruises in the MED. During her 1948 MED Cruise, the STRIBLING became the first U.S. Ship to ever fly the flag of the United Nations. This she did in the Palestine Patrol which was the highlight of the cruise.

In 1949 the STRIBLING set sail for another Mediterranean tour with the SIXTH Fleet. The itinerary of this trip included such ports of call as Venice, Trieste, Naples, and various Grecian ports. The climax of this cruise with the SIXTH Fleet was a trip to Spain with two cruisers and another destroyer, headed by Admiral Richard L. Connolly, then Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Naval Forces in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. This was the first official visit of American Naval Forces to Spain since the Spanish Civil War.

Shortly after the return to the United States, the STRIBLING departed on the most rigorous cruise of its short history, the North Atlantic Maneuvers, most of which took place in Arctic Waters. Throughout this cruise, the ship endured unsurpassed wind and seas which will live long in the memories of the men who made this three week voyage.

Cards

Again in 1950 and 1951 the STRIBLING joined the powerful SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean during which time she visited most of the ports bordering that great inland sea. During the 1950 cruise with the SIXTH Fleet, the STRIBLING also visited numerous Northern European and Scandinavian ports.

From 21 April to 25 June 1952, the ship served as flagship for Commander Destroyer Flotilla FOUR, Rear Admiral G. C. WOOD. As flagship, the STRIBLING visited Iran, Algeria, Gibraltar, BCC, and the Azores. Enroute to the Mediterranean, the ship participated in the search for survivors from the USS HOBSON with Admiral WOOD in command of rescue operations.

The STRIBLING sailed from Norfolk, Virginia, on 23 August 1953, for Balboa, Panama, on the first leg of her seven and one-half months cruise around the world. Arriving at Yokosuka, Japan, on 3 October 1953, and following a brief upkeep period, she began her Far Eastern operations lasting four months and eight days of steaming 20,134 miles. The ship's diverse operating schedule took her into the combat zone near Korea each of the five calendar months she spent in the Far East. Twice the ship operated with Fast Carrier Task Force 77 which patrols the Sea of Japan. Her first operations in the Far East were with CTF 77 for the fifteen-day period of 17 October to 1 November 1953, and she spent her longest operational period, 23 consecutive days, with Carrier Task Force 77.

As a unit of Task Force 95, the United Nations Escort and Blockading Force, the STRIBLING patrolled the West Coast of Korea and the Yellow Sea with another American destroyer and the Australian carrier, HMAS SIDNEY.

In addition to the operations, training, and touring, certain members of the crew participated in a memorable rescue at sea. On 16 December, four ship-wrecked Koreans were spotted by the STRIBLING'S Port Lookout and rescued, having been adrift for one week after their vessel sunk. The ship received a letter of thanks and a "WELL DONE" from CNO, Republic of Korea.

On 19 March 1954, the STRIBLING reached Port Said, Egypt, after transitting the second of the world's two big canals. After stopping in various Mediterranean ports, the ship finally arrived in Norfolk on 10 April 1954.

Remaining in Norfolk Operating Area during the Summer of 1954, the STRIBLING set sail in September to participate in Hunter/Killer exercises off Londonderry, Ireland. With her two-year cycle completed, she went into the Charleston Naval Shipyard in the Spring of 1955 and upon completion of the overhaul, left for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and refresher training.

In August 1955, the officers and crew of the STRIBLING were assembled on the fantail while Rear Admiral FROST, Commander Destroyer Flotilla FOUR, presented the Destroyer Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet Battle Efficiency Plaque to the ship. This was the STRIBLING'S hard-earned reward for being one of the most efficient ships in her class in DESLANT in over-all combat readiness for 1955. This was the STRIBLING'S second consecutive battle efficiency award.

Returning to Norfolk after a cruise to the Gulf of Mexico, type training, leave and upkeep filled the curriculum until the advent of the next Mediterranean tour in February 1956. The first port-of-call was Cannes. The Riviera was visited by the first snow storm in 25 years during the STRIBLING'S stay. Other ports included Phaleron Bay, Greece; Palma, Naples and Beirut. The ship then called at Iskenderun and Antalya in Turkey, Gibraltar, and the Azores before returning to Norfolk on 2 June in time to receive her third consecutive battle efficiency "E".

In November of 1956, the STRIBLING turned eastward and crossed the Atlantic once again as an element of Task Force 26, the "Mystery Fleet". In company with the carriers FORRESTAL, LAKE CHAMPLAIN, and ROOSEVELT, heavy cruiser DES MOINES, and a varying force of eleven to twenty destroyers, she steamed to Lisbon, but returned to Norfolk in time for Christmas.

Early in January 1957, the STRIBLING joined the LAKE CHAMPLAIN again for plane guard duties in Mayport, Florida. Two weeks later she sailed with DESRON SIX for SPRINGBOARD in the Caribbean, stopping at Havana, and San Juan for liberty. During this time her fantail served as a photographers platform from which sequences of Navy Life were taken by Louis de Rochemont Studios in a new process called "cinemiracle".

In March the STRIBLING was assigned the duty of protecting President Eisenhower on his cruise to Bermuda to confer with Prime Minister MacMillan of Great Britain. Returning from that duty, she underwent another yard overhaul period after which she went again to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for refresher training.

Upon completion of refresher training, the STRIBLING returned to Norfolk to engage in evaluating some new communications equipment. The development of this new communication system promises better communications to the Navy.

With the Christmas Holidays over and another new year begun, the STRIBLING departed on Operation SPRINGBOARD 1958 and warm winter in the Caribbean. Ports-of-call included San Juan, Ciudad Trujillo, St. Thomas, and Havana.

Returning from SPRINGBOARD, the STRIBLING participated during March of 1958 in an amphibious exercise, LANTPHIBEX - 58, and along with the remainder of DESRON SIX earned COMPHIBLANT'S "WELL DONE" for her action in this exercise.

In June of 1958, the STRIBLING departed Norfolk once again for duty in the Mediterranean. During this tour of duty, she participated in the Lebanon Crisis and saw duty in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf areas. She visited ports such as Athens and Rhodes, Greece; Naples, Italy; and Bahrein, Persian Gulf. On the return trip in September the STRIBLING roared 50 miles through heavy seas to rescue a pilot, LT (b) (6) of the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) from the waters of the Atlantic.

Just four and one-half months after returning from the MED, the STRIBLING departed Norfolk once again with DESRON SIX and SIXTEEN for a six and one-half month cruise with the SIXTH Fleet. Ports-of-call in the MED included Naples, Genoa, and Trieste, Italy; Cannes and Sete, France; Valencia and Barcelona, Spain; Istanbul, Turkey; Palermo, Sicily; and Gibraltar. During the 1959 MED Cruise the STRIBLING was visited by Admiral Arleigh BURKE, Chief of Naval Operations. This was the most important single event of the cruise.

Upon return from the 1959 MED Cruise the STRIBLING spent the remainder of 1959 in an UPKEEP status. Ship's force and tender personnel spent many long hours during this period bringing the tired STRIBLING back into a first class material condition.

January 1960 found the STRIBLING back at sea off the Florida coast acting as rescue destroyer for the USS INDEPENDENCE (CVA-62). During this cruise the STRIBLING received word that the ship would definitely take part in the Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization Program and was scheduled to enter the Charleston Naval Shipyard in June 1960 for a FRAM MK 1 conversion. The remainder of the winter and spring were spent preparing for the coming overhaul and participating in various local operations including the rendering of assistance to the West German Freighter Berndt Leonhardt after her collision with the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60). The STRIBLING received a "WELL DONE" from COMCARDIV SIX for her assistance to the SARATOGA and Berndt Leonhardt.

The STRIBLING entered the Charleston Naval Shipyard on 1 June 1960 to begin FRAM 1 overhaul.

Many of the crew were transferred to other ships and those remaining moved to the barracks at the U.S. Naval Base, Charleston. The old ship was stripped down to the maindecks as 3"/50 guns, anti-aircraft guns, depth charges racks, torpedo tubes, and other armament were removed. Most of these were not to be replaced, but the forward 5"/38 guns and new, improved torpedo tubes were installed.

The main deck was torn out and compartments were made more serviceable with air conditioning and better arrangements of tables and other necessary equipment.

Bulkheads rose in different locations and new compartments were sealed off. A flight deck and hangar were added and an ASROC launcher installed amidships.

Commissioning ceremonies were held 22 April, and sea trials begun.

On 12 May the STRIBLING completed her FRAM overhaul and moved out to sea to begin refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Upon completion of refresher training, on 18 August, the ship sailed to its new home port, Mayport, Florida and joined DESRON 14.

From September to December 1961, the STRIBLING joined the NATO forces in Exercise LIME JUG in the North Atlantic. The ship docked at Southampton, England and Belfast, Ireland, and many persons visited London and Dublin.

The return trip was rough. Stanchions were torn off, ladders were twisted like pretzels, a hole was torn in the CPO bulkhead, paint was washed off and the numerals 867 were barely showing. One man had an attack of appendicitis. When the ship finally arrived at Mayport, the condition of the ship, together with the ambulance standing by, caused many families to worry for "it looked like the STRIBLING fought a war".

In February 1962, the STRIBLING with the USS NOA and other ships went on range for the MERCURY shot which resulted in the recovery of LT COL John H. GLENN, USMC, by the NOA.

In March during ASW exercises with Task Group ALFA, the STRIBLING responded to the call of distress signals from the SS GEM which was in trouble off Cape Hatteras. In spite of rough weather, a life raft was launched and 26 men were saved from the stern of the tanker. A hero's welcome awaited STRIBLING when it returned to Mayport where TV, radio, national and local news media interviewed the ship's crew and the grateful men who had been rescued. As one British merchantman said, "I was never so glad to see the American Navy."

A lull in trips occurred, but not in the work, because in July the STRIBLING was selected as one of three ships to go to Washington to be inspected by the Chief of Naval Operations, members of the Senate and House of Representatives, and military and civilians of the various military organizations responsible for the types of ships the Navy will have in the future.

On return to Mayport, while making preparations for SIXTH Fleet deployment, the STRIBLING proudly displayed another "E" for efficiency in DESRON 14.

The crew bade farewell to their families on 3 August and began a MED Cruise with the SIXTH Fleet.

It was a smooth trip across the Atlantic and only a few days could be considered rough as the ship joined others of the American, French, and British Navies for Exercise RIPTIDE III in the Atlantic.

Prior to transitting the Suez Canal on 1 September to report for duty with the Middle East Forces, the ship visited Naples and Athens. On 7 September the ship moored at Djibouti, French Somaliland, and on the 16th at Bahrain Island in the Persian Gulf.

On the 19th, the STRIBLING, USS PERRY, and USS GREENWICH BAY, with units of the Iranian Navy, conducted exercises off Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf. On the 24th of September, the STRIBLING broke the COMIDEAST FORCE flag as Rear Admiral SEMMES and his aids rode the ship that day.

On 29 September, at Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia, members of the Saudi Arabian Navy came aboard for an inspection and underway exercise in which they observed 5"/38 gun firing, and took part in fire drills, and were allowed to maneuver the ship for "man overboard" drill. The sound of the Arabic language over the LMC system was very strange indeed.

Before departing from the Middle East, the ship visited Aden, and then having been relieved on 15 October, transitted the Suez Canal for the 5th time, and rejoined the SIXTH Fleet.

During the period 15 October to 1 December, while operating with the SIXTH Fleet, the ship visited Golfe Juan, France; Gaeta and Naples, Italy, and Messina, Sicily.

Homeward bound in the latter part of February 1963, STRIBLING arrived at Mayport on 2 March. The cruise had been rewarding in many respects. From Kharg Island, Iran, and Djibouti, French Somaliland, to Barcelona, Spain, STRIBLING had come in contact with many different climates and peoples, conveying to these people an insight to America and gaining an awareness of cultures and ideas different from our own. In addition, the tour with the SIXTH Fleet gave the ship important experience in the complex and demanding operations and logistics of a mobile strike group and the pride of being a part of a very vital and effective element of this country's first line of defense.

Ironically, but understandable, the most enjoyable part of such an experience is the homecoming. STRIBLING had been gone from 3 August 1962 to 2 March 1963, a period covering nearly two-thirds of a year but which seemed longer to many.

Shortly after the return to Mayport began a much needed leave and upkeep period, punctuated by an assignment as a training ship for the Fleet Sonar School, Key West, Florida, for two weeks during April. In May the STRIBLING went to Norfolk for a yard period at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and here it was discovered that a number of highly corroded hull plates required replacement. Portsmouth being too busy to do the required work, the ship was assigned a yard availability at a private yard in Jacksonville where damage to the Sonar and propellers were incurred while drydocking. A somewhat prolonged period in the drydock failed to correct all ills for the ship developed a very noticeable vibration during subsequent sea trials. A return to the drydock in order to inspect and straighten a slightly misaligned STRIBLING to make her next scheduled cruise.

In early August she departed for six weeks to Bermuda and Ponta Delgade on the Island of San Miguel in the Azores. This proved a very welcome respite from the previous several months.

Upon return from the Azores cruise, she again went into drydock at another Jacksonville shipyard. Further work on the propulsion shaft finally corrected the vibration problems and in October STRIBLING could be considered "ready for sea."

The remainder of the fall saw the ship operating in the Mayport area conducting exercises and participating in one large fleet off the Virginia Capes. Much time was spent in port and in November STRIBLING received confirmation that she would deploy to the MED with Destroyer Division ONE FOUR TWO in early February 1964.

STRIBLING spent all of January 1964 in Mayport preparing for the forthcoming MED deployment, and on 8 February she departed Mayport with other units of Destroyer Division ONE FOUR TWO.

Piraeus/Athens, Greece was the first liberty port in the MED in January. Early in March STRIBLING transitted the Suez Canal for duty with MIDEASTFOR, stopping at Jidda, Ethiopia; Djibouti, French Somaliland; Mena Al Ahmadi, Kuwait; the British Protectorate of Aden; Bahrain Island in the Persian Gulf; Karachi, Pakistan; and Kharg Island, Iran. While with MIDEASTFOR, STRIBLING participated in OPERATION DELAWAR and received a commendation from Rear Admiral A. F. SCHADE, USN, COMMIDEASTFOR, for outstanding performance in gunnery.

On 1 May STRIBLING departed MIDEASTFOR and transitted the Suez Canal once again. She proceeded to Naples and a tender availability period. During this time, on 16 May, Change of Command Ceremonies were held at which time CDR M. O. GEARY, USN, relieved CDR R. B. JACOBS, USN, as Commanding Officer.

While in Naples STRIBLING received confirmation that she would participate in the 20th Anniversary Commemoration of the Normandy Invasions. This she did with units of the French, British, and Canadian Navies. Ports of interest which were visited were Portsmouth, England, and Cherbourg, France.

In mid-June STRIBLING visited Bordeaux, France to help celebrate the opening of the International Trade Fair. STRIBLING was the first United States Navy ship to visit Bordeaux in over three years.

From mid-June to mid-July STRIBLING operated with units of the U. S. SIXTH Fleet, making calls at Tbiza, Baleric Island, and Valencia, Spain. After these operations she departed the MED for return to the United States, a long but very enjoyable MED cruise behind her.

In late August STRIBLING arrived at Mayport for a period spent preparing for general overhaul. This stay was interrupted by Hurricane DORA, forcing STRIBLING to leave Mayport to evade the storm. In mid-September STRIBLING entered Charleston Naval Shipyard for a regular overhaul which extended into early 1965.

After completion of her first yard overhaul since FRAM, STRIBLING departed Charleston, South Carolina on 18 January 1965 for exercises in the Norfolk Operating Area and after more than four months absence, entered Mayport on 27 January. After a short stay, STRIBLING got underway for Guantanamo Bay and six grueling weeks of refresher training. The work at "GITMO" was hard, but the STRIBLING crew put forth its best effort and made a fine mark on her final ORI. STRIBLING's grade on her ASW ORI was the highest ever awarded by the professionals at Fleet Training Group Guantanamo Bay to a FRAM I destroyer.

After completion of shore bombardment qualifications at Culebra, STRIBLING returned to Mayport on 22 March and commenced preparations for another deployment to SIXTH Fleet. Departing for the MED on 17 May, STRIBLING arrived in Rota, Spain ten days later. From there, STRIBLING proceeded via Soudha Bay, Crete, and the Suez Canal to the Middle East. Successive ports of call during operations with Middle East Force were Port Sudan, Aden, and Diego Suarez and Tamatave in Madagascar. En route to Madagascar, STRIBLING crossed the equator and the ceremonies attendant to the creation of shellback from pollywogs were most colorful.

Returning to the Mediterranean again via Aden and the Suez Canal, STRIBLING put into Piraeus, Greece, for liberty and then moved on to Naples for a tender availability period. Early August was spent operating with the SIXTH Fleet, some fine liberty in Palma, Spain, and turning over to the USS NORRIS in Pollensa Bay.

On 1 September STRIBLING returned to Mayport after another successful MED deployment, including her third successive Middle East assignment. Only two days after arrival STRIBLING was again underway to avoid Hurricane BETSY. Evasion efforts were successful and STRIBLING returned to Mayport on 11 September and spent the remainder of the month in a tender availability period.

October was spent in preparation for and performance of special operations under the operational control of COMSUBLANT. Returning to Mayport from these operation on 12 November, STRIBLING's crew was permitted to remain in port until 8 December for some well-earned time with families and friends. The period 8 to 17 December was spent at sea plane guarding for USS INDEPENDENCE and USS SARATOGA and after return to Mayport, STRIBLING commenced another tender availability period in preparation for her next scheduled operation to commence in mid-January 1966.

USS STRIBLING celebrated her 21st birthday in 1966 and completed a busy year highlighted to two important events; First, successful implementation of the DASH weapons system in April and second, an historic visit to Port Said, United Arab Republic, in September. By visiting Port Said STRIBLING helped to perform an important diplomatic service in American efforts to improve relations with the United Arab Republic. On the other hand, the installation of the drone anti-submarine helicopters provided STRIBLING with another lethal weapon to be used against possible submarine threats arising in time of war.

On 4 January STRIBLING began a three-week cruise to the Caribbean to participate in 1966 SPRINGBOARD exercises. One of the highlights of these exercises was the impressive performance of STRIBLING's two 5 inch 38 gun mounts, which fired more than 1400 rounds in various gunnery exercises. Not only did STRIBLING qualify again as a naval shore bombardment ship, she also demonstrated her versatility by scoring very high in anti-air gunnery exercises. During the cruise, the ports of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and San Juan were visited.

On 4 April, STRIBLING sailed north to Virginia, this time to receive the DASH Ship Qualification Team at Norfolk. The preparation of the ship for DASH was so thorough that STRIBLING was able to cut the normal time of one week in Norfolk to less than three days, sailing for Mayport and arriving on 9 April. The remainder of April was spent in and out of home port as STRIBLING, assisted by technicians from Gyrodyne Corp. successfully tested her new drone anti-submarine helicopters. STRIBLING officially became a DASH-qualified ship without restrictions on 4 May.

Departing on 20 June, STRIBLING and the other Mayport-based destroyers arrived in Gibraltar on 30 June. During her stay in the MED, STRIBLING had the opportunity to visit and take liberty in the ports of Genoa; Siracusa, Calian; and Taranto, Italy. In Taranto STRIBLING's motor whale handily defeated the USS BAILEY'S in a race around the USS SARATOGA (CVA-60). Following the "great race" STRIBLING paid calls to Naples, Argostoli Bay, Port Said, Paraeus, Ibiza and Palma in the Balearic Island, and Vallencia.

The most memorable and important port of call was Port Said. On a hot Friday morning of 2 September, the two ships steamed up to the mouth of the Suez Canal. STRIBLING fired a 21-gun salute as she followed behind the INGRAM. A hectic schedule of social events and tours followed for all members of the crew. Saturday, more than 500 residents of Port Said came aboard both ships for tours. After a busy three day visit, which earned both ships high praise from various military commands in the Mediterranean Area as well as diplomatic officials, STRIBLING and INGRAM set sail for Athens.

On 9 October, STRIBLING and the other five DESRON 14 ships arrived in Gibraltar to be relieved by ships of Destroyer Squadron FOUR. Finally on the morning of 20 October, STRIBLING entered homeport, thus completing her ninth deployment to the Mediterranean. Three weeks later STRIBLING accompanied by USS NOA got underway for eight days of plane-guarding for USS AMERICA (CVA-66), returning to Mayport in time for Thanksgiving.

On Monday, 28 November, STRIBLING again left port for her last major evolution of the year, a unit of Task Unit 29.2.3. in LANTFLEX 66. On 16 December the final sea detail of the year was set on board STRIBLING as she entered Mayport for a holiday leave and upkeep. She had logged 200 days away from homeport in 1966.

USS STRIBLING celebrated her 22nd birthday during 1967 and the entire year was a busy and productive one as have been all the 21 earlier years of her service. The year was highlighted by two important events. The first was the witness of a successful missile firing off Cape Kennedy, Florida. The second was completion of a highly successful and active Mediterranean deployment of over five months.

During February and March of 1967 STRIBLING served as test ship for several SSBN's completing their operational qualifications. Upon her arrival at Cape Kennedy, over thirty tons of sophisticated electronic gear was installed for use in the nuclear submarine qualification tests and checkout. Each day the ship would put out to sea in company with her Polaris carrying submarine and go through extensive exercises and tests all aimed at the ultimate event, a successful firing of a Polaris missile down the Atlantic Test Range. On the day of the firing numerous guests were aboard including Commander R. E. HENRY of the Royal Navy, the man chosen to serve as Commanding Officer of the first four British submarines that will carry the Polaris missile and therefore markedly increase the free world nuclear capability. The firing went off without a hitch and the entire STRIBLING crew of Officers and men were commended for their timely and outstanding efforts. Once again the destroyer had proven her versatility and shown the many talents of her crew.

The long, hard but successful Mediterranean deployment found STRIBLING serving in the environment for which she is most suited, extended deployment in a foreign sea exercising her offensive muscles with sister ships of the squadron, the SIXTH Fleet, and various air and sea units of our NATO allies. The Mediterranean deployment was both marred and highlighted by one event, a serious casualty to number four boiler. Though the casualty removed STRIBLING from the active line for thirty days, it was because of the superior efforts of her Engineering personnel that her disability was so quickly repaired. The entire generating bank of the boiler was replaced at Malta Drydocks and the ship was back at sea less than one month after the casualty occurred.

Her main propulsion plant back in commission, STRIBLING steamed out of Malta in mid-October and once again assumed her role in the Mediterranean activities. Ports of call included Mytilene, Greece, Soudha Bay, Crete, Piraeus, Greece, Diano Marina, Italy - which proved to be one of the cruise highlights - Taranto, Italy; Vallenta, Malta; Alicante, Spain; and finally Lisbon, Portugal.

December and the Christmas Season found her heading once again west, toward home and a long awaited holiday reunion with family and loved ones in homeport.

What STRIBLING met on 3 December was not a human enemy but the natural enemy that has plagued men since there have been ships in which to sail - heavy weather. The wind and sea began to build up and by 4 December the ships were fighting for their lives. Seas of thirty feet, whipped by winds of 50 to 60 knots, dealt crushing blows to the ships. Formation course was altered to insure that damage was kept to a minimum. On 5 December the storm abated and the group again headed directly for home. On 6 December the last sea detail for 1967 was secured and the ship moored securely in a nest of destroyers at Mayport. The deployment was ended and the crew settled back to enjoy holiday leave and upkeep period. 31 December found STRIBLING gaily lighted and a second place winner in the Christmas Lighting Contest.

1968 found STRIBLING celebrating her 23rd year of service, still one of the steamingest ships in the fleet.

Following the holiday leave and upkeep period STRIBLING sailed from Mayport on 7 January for Charleston and a yard overhaul in the Naval Shipyard there.

STRIBLING remained in the yards, where crew and yard workers labored to overhaul her engineering, weapons and electronic systems and to refurbish her living spaces, until 6 July. After STRIBLING thoroughly checked all systems she returned to homeport for 3 weeks.

On 26 July sea detail was set and STRIBLING set her course for GTMO to receive 6 weeks refresher training. The hours were long and hard but the high state of training accomplished at the end was well worth the effort. Following GTMO, STRIBLING steamed down to qualify in gun-fire support, enjoying a short but pleasant and unexpected stay in San Juan for 2 days.

Returning to Mayport for a short stay with families and friends STRIBLING left again on 4 October to provide services as Destroyer School Ship in Norfolk and Newport. Completing her assigned tasks with many compliments she returned to Mayport on 21 October.

October 28 found STRIBLING steaming south to provide services as Sonar School Ship in Key West, the warm sunny weather a welcome relief from the cold fog of Newport.

Returning on 14 November 1968 STRIBLING moored alongside USS YELLOWSTONE (AD-27) and commenced her pre-overseas movement tender availability. The crew enjoyed the period of holiday leave and liberty while working at preparing for an 8 month deployment in January 1969.

As STRIBLING moved into her 24th year of continuous service in 1969, her crew was grooming her for a grueling 8 month deployment to Southeast Asia. It had been nearly two decades since STRIBLING's last visit to this part of the globe during the Korean War in the 1950's. In 1969 STRIBLING's guns and crew were being called upon to aid in the Free World's effort in the Vietnamese conflict.

STRIBLING departed Mayport 30 January 1969 for the 10,000 mile journey to the waters off Vietnam in company with DESDIV 142 which included the destroyers NOA and MEREDITH. During the transit to the Panama Canal, the destroyer LEARY from Norfolk would also join forces.

The transit included passage through the historic Panama Canal, a brief stopover in San Diego for PACFLEET briefings, a somewhat stormy passage to Hawaii and then it was on to Yokosuka, Japan and operations with the Seventh Fleet.

After a stay in Yokosuka which included final repairs and preparations, the STRIBLING steamed southward loaded with ammunition and displaying her new installation of 50 caliber machine guns.

On the morning of 21 March 1969 STRIBLING was "on station ready for call for fire" in support of shore operations a few miles north of Da Nang, South Vietnam. It was here that she fired first round in support of U. S. forces; an event now commemorated on board by a plaque which incorporates the actual shell casing used. With this gunline effort STRIBLING was in support of the 101st Airborne Division, but she would subsequently support South Korean Marines, various units of the Army and, of course, the United States Marines.

Duties following the gunline included Search and Rescue operations (SAR) and on station Positive Radar Advisory Zone (PIRAZ) activities which often brought STRIBLING to within 25 miles of the hostile capital city of Hanoi. In there activities STRIBLING acted as shotgun destroyer for larger ships equipped with more sophisticated radar and target designation systems.

During the month of May, the Secretary of the Navy, John CHAFEE, was highlined to the STRIBLING for a first-hand experience of a destroyer on station in the "Combat Zone".

May, June and July involved plane guard duties with several carriers on "Yankee Station" in the Gulf of Tonkin. Well-deserved liberty in Kao Hsiung, Free China; Subic Bay, Philippines, and Hong Kong was enjoyed by the crew during this and previous periods of "on station" activity.

During the latter part of June STRIBLING left the Combat Zone for several weeks to provide guard services for the carrier KITTY HAWK which was involved in activities in the vicinity of Korea. This transit north provided an

unexpected but greatly needed 10 dayupkeep period in Sasebo, Japan.

July, the last full month of activity in the Combat Zone was filled by plane guard duties and a short return to gunline in support of an Amphibious landing on the Batagan Peninsula south of Da Nang. STRIBLING left the Combat Zone on 2 August for the long travel home.

The homeward passage included a semi-diplomatic visit to Kure, Japan (20 miles south of Hiroshima) on 6 August - the 24th anniversary of the Atomic bombing of Hiroshima. STRIBLING was graciously received as the first visit by a U. S. Navy vessel in almost five years.

Departing Kure, STRIBLING retraced her steps homeward, making stops in the now familiar ports of Yokosuka, Midway, Hawaii, San Diego and Panama. A brief "R & R" stop in Acapulco, Mexico was also experienced.

STRIBLING returned to her homeport on 17 September 1969 for a period of leave and upkeep. STRIBLING's activities while on deployment had resulted in numerous accolades including a Seventh Fleet Letter of Commendation for STRIBLING's diligent efforts on the gunline, SAR, PIRAZ and plane guard duties and her most creditable ability to meet every commitment.

The latter part of 1969 included a test firing of an ASROC off Charleston, S. C. and operations with the nuclear submarine JOHN ADAMS for firing of a Polaris A-3 missile.

As 1969 drew to a close STRIBLING went into a reduced operational or modified "CADRE" status. With the advent of 1970 STRIBLING embarked upon the completion of a quarter century of service in this country's first line of defense.

STRIBLING remained in Mayport in reduced operational status until preparations for another Mediterranean deployment began in May of 1970. The next stop for the ship was Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for modified refresher training in June of 1970.

STRIBLING departed for extended operations in the Mediterranean with the U. S. Sixth Fleet on 27 August 1970.

TANGIER, MOROCCO, and Valencia, Spain were among the ports visited by the ship during the month of September. In October STRIBLING took part in the "Jordanian Crisis" earning a Meritorious Unit Citation for operations in connection with that Middle East situation.

The ship returned to normal operations in November of 1970. During that month STRIBLING "showed the flag" in many ports including Naples and Taranto, Italy; Athens, Greece; Iskenderon Bay, Turkey; and Barc lora, Spain. Christmas found STRIBLING at Golfe Juan on the French Riviera.


After further operations with the U. S. Sixth Fleet, STRIBLING crossed the Atlantic and returned to Mayport on 1 March 1971 to commence a brief "stand down" period before entering Charleston Naval Shipyard on 27 April for a regular overhaul. During her time in the shipyard STRIBLING's crew worked diligently to insure that the ship would again be ready to meet all her future commitments.

Her overhaul complete, STRIBLING departed Charleston on 5 September to transit to Mayport for a brief stay before leaving for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for modified refresher training.

STRIBLING arrived in "GITMO" on 4 October. After extensive training, which included numerous engineering and damage control drills and gun fire support exercises at Culebra, the ship returned to Mayport on 15 November 1971 to commence a series of inspections designed to bring STRIBLING to peak efficiency before her MED deployment on 15 February 1972.

During this final period before deployment the ship went into Jacksonville Shipyard at Jacksonville, Florida for a Restricted Availability to replace a defective sonar transducer. This unexpected, but necessary yard work was accomplished in the minimum time possible, allowing STRIBLING to transit up to Norfolk, Virginia, to run the degaussing range. On the way up to Norfolk, STRIBLING joined USS TATTNAL, USS INGRAM and USS MEREDITH of DESRON FOURTEEN for a brief period of tactical operations.

Through the efforts of her crew and supporting facilities, STRIBLING stands ready to continue her role in the defense of the vital interests of the United States.


R. L. BAUCHSPIES JR.
Commander, U. S. Navy
Commanding Officer
USS STRIBLING (DD-867)